



## **SPECIAL REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON  
THURSDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER 2015 AT 5.30 P.M.**

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PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Davies – Chair  
Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth – Vice-Chair

Councillors:

M. Adams, J. Bevan, Mrs A. Blackman, C.J. Cuss, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, R.W. Gough,  
Ms J.G. Jones, S. Kent, M. Prew, Mrs D. Price, A. Rees

Cabinet Members:

N. George (Community and Leisure Services), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and  
Sustainable Development), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering)

Together with:

C. Harrhy (Corporate Director – Communities), P. Elliott (Head of Regeneration and  
Planning), T. Shaw (Head of Engineering Services), M.S. Williams (Head of Community and  
Leisure Services), M. Eedy (Finance Manager - Environment Directorate), J. Reynolds (Sports  
and Leisure Facilities Manager), B. Manners (Solicitor) and R. Barrett (Committee Services  
Officer)

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs P. Leonard and Mrs E. Stenner.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor D.T. Davies declared an interest in Agenda Item 3 (Draft Savings Proposals for  
2016/17) in respect of Bowling Green Rationalisation. Details are minuted with the respective  
item.

### **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

### 3. DRAFT SAVINGS PROPOSALS FOR 2016/17 – COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE

Christina Harrhy (Corporate Director – Communities) introduced the report, which set out details of draft 2016/17 savings proposals for the Communities Directorate and sought Members' comments on the proposed savings prior to final proposals being presented to Cabinet in February 2016.

Members were reminded that on 25th February 2015 Council approved the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) that showed a potential savings requirement of £14.030m for the 2016/17 financial year and £12.105m for 2017/18. This position assumed a 3.4% cut for both financial years in the Aggregate External Finance (Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Redistributed Non-Domestic Rates) funding received from the Welsh Government (WG). In recent months the UK Government has undertaken a Comprehensive Spending Review and has asked for savings of between 25% and 40% for non-protected areas. As a consequence of this, the financial outlook for Local Government in Wales will inevitably worsen and this will be exacerbated by the likelihood of WG continuing to offer a degree of protection to the NHS.

This Spending Review has resulted in a delay in the announcement of the WG 2016/17 Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement and this is not expected until 9th December 2015. However, as cuts are likely to be deeper than originally anticipated, the MTFP has now been revised to reflect a reduction in the Aggregate External Finance (AEF) of 4.3% for 2016/17 and 2017/18, which equates to a further cash reduction of £2.555m for 2016/17 and £2.360m for 2017/18 above the levels originally assumed (i.e. a total savings requirement of £31.050m).

The 2016/17 Draft Savings Proposals Report presented to Cabinet on 14th October 2015 included an updated MTFP based on a number of assumptions and adjustments (some of which have reduced the overall savings requirement). Full details of these were contained within the report. After all of the above adjustments have been factored into the updated MTFP the remaining projected savings requirement for the Authority are £14.321m for 2016/17, £11.441m for 2017/18 and £9.423m for 2018/19.

The budget strategy agreed by Council on 25th February 2015 included a number of principles to be followed throughout the process of identifying savings proposals. These have been followed and the work to identify savings proposals has been led by the Corporate Management Team in consultation with appropriate Cabinet Members. Heads of Service have been heavily involved throughout the process with support from colleagues in Finance. Service Managers have also been included to ensure that all options that are deliverable for 2016/17 have been considered.

Some of the approved savings for the 2015/16 financial year only had a part-year impact (totalling £1.980m) with the full-year impact now being available to support the savings required for 2016/17. These were summarised in Section 4.2.3 of the report. A high-level summary of the new proposed savings for the 2016/17 financial year by service area and totalling £12.432m was also included in the report. The total proposed savings of £12.432m along with the £1.980m full-year impacts is £91,000 higher than the anticipated total savings requirement of £14.321m for the 2016/17 financial year. This provides a small buffer which can be used to reconsider some of the savings proposals at the conclusion of the ongoing consultation process or alternatively the £91,000 can be set aside as savings in advance for the 2017/18 financial year.

The report presented to Cabinet on 14th October 2015 identified savings proposals totalling £8.661m across all service areas that do not have a direct impact on service users or the public. These proposals were categorised into a single line for each service area in the Appendices of the report. This is consistent with the approach adopted last year and the proposals consist in the main of vacancy management, structural reviews, budget realignment and minor changes to service provision.

The 2016/17 new savings proposals for the Communities Directorate amount to £1.824m, which represents 4.19% of the Directorate's 2015/16 total net budget. £1.136m of the savings proposals will have no direct impact on service users or the public. The remaining draft 2016/17 savings proposals totalling £0.688m for the Communities Directorate will have an impact on service users and/or the public. Full details of the savings proposals that will have an impact on service users and/or the public, together with the category of impact (low, medium or high) were outlined within the report appendices.

Some of the savings proposals will have a part-year impact in 2016/17 but will potentially deliver further savings in 2017/18. The most notable of these are the following: -

- Evaluate options to reduce the deficit at Blackwood Miners Institute (£37,000 saving in 2016/17 and £111,000 in 2017/18);
- Evaluate options to reduce the deficit at the Winding House Museum (£34,000 saving in 2016/17 and £102,000 in 2017/18);
- Bowling Green Rationalisation (£50,000 saving in 2016/17 and £120,000 in 2017/18);
- Transfer of Bedwas Leisure Centre to Bedwas High School (£50,000 saving in 2016/17 and £50,000 in 2017/18).

The Director was thanked for the report and the Chair advised that when considering the proposals, as detailed in the appendices to the report, it was intended to debate and vote on each item individually in order that Officers could be aware of the views of the Members and their support or otherwise on the proposed savings as detailed therein.

#### **4. REGENERATION AND PLANNING DIVISION - 2016/17 DRAFT SAVINGS PROPOSALS WITH AN IMPACT ON SERVICE USERS AND/OR THE PUBLIC**

Pauline Elliott (Head of Regeneration and Planning) presented details of the draft savings proposals for 2016/17 within the Regeneration and Planning Division which will have an impact on service users and/or the public.

##### **ERP11 - Increase in Fees for Pre-planning Advice (Saving £5,000) Public Impact: Low**

Members were advised that fees for pre-planning advice were introduced as part of MTFP savings for the 2014/15 financial year with an estimated income target of £20,000. This target was slightly exceeded due to an increase in applications, and it was therefore proposed to increase the target by a further £5,000 by introducing a £48.00 charge on householder applications.

Members were informed that most Planning Authorities in Wales and the UK now charge for such advice and since Caerphilly introduced charges for other categories in April 2014 there have been very few complaints received on this matter.

In response to Members' queries, Officers explained that the levy would be for householder planning applications, which would be advertised prior to its implementation, and that this charge related to pre-planning advice (i.e. advice given prior to a planning application being submitted). Members suggested that it would be useful to see a comparison of the pre-planning advice charges levied by other local authorities in Wales. Officers explained that this information had previously been presented to the Planning Committee and gave assurances that competitive and appropriate rates were being charged by the Authority.

Following consideration of the report, it was unanimously agreed that this proposal be supported.

### **ERP18 - Review of Events Budget (Saving £17,000)**

**Public Impact: Low**

Members were advised that the Events Team have made considerable savings in recent years (£90,000 in 2015/16) to contribute to the MTFP. Although staffing has been reduced and marketing budgets trimmed, the Team has managed to protect core events throughout the county borough by increasing sponsorship and fees. It was considered that following trends from recent years, a saving of £17,000k for 2016/17 could be achieved by methods such as increasing fees and charges for stallholders at events (such as the Big Cheese).

Members sought assurances that the standard and public enjoyment of Council events would not be affected by these proposals, and Officers reiterated the need for savings to be made in this service, explaining that there would be a low impact due to the continued popularity of these events and the high demand for stall/pitch hire. Discussion also took place regarding the processes involved in allocating stalls/pitches at these events to traders. It was suggested that it would be useful for a list of charges for each event to be provided to Members, including any proposed increases, and it was confirmed that this could be circulated to the Scrutiny Committee following the meeting.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 5 against) this was agreed by the majority present.

### **ERP19 - Reduction in Community Regeneration Budget (Saving £20,000)**

**Public Impact: Low**

Members were advised that Regeneration and Planning administer a grant budget of £229,000 via a Panel which evaluates bids for schemes from groups throughout the county borough. It was proposed to reduce this funding by £20,000 for 2016/17 and although some groups might be adversely affected by this reduction/removal, it was considered that this 10% reduction is warranted due to the current pressure to deliver savings.

Members suggested that it would be beneficial to view a list of the proposed reductions to determine which groups might be affected by these proposals. Some Members expressed reservations in voting on this proposal when there was uncertainty as to what grants could be reduced or removed. Officers explained that it was difficult to pre-empt which groups could be affected, and that it was important to maintain a balance in respect of the amount of information presented in the report. Members were reminded that clarification on the proposals could be sought from Officers in advance of the meeting if required.

Officers also outlined the process by which the Grants Panel allocate funding, including the frequency of such meetings and the scoring criteria used.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 3 against) this was agreed by the majority present.

### **ERP24 - Evaluate options to reduce the deficit at Blackwood Miners Institute (BMI) (Saving £37,000 in 2016/17 and £111,000 in 2017/18)**

**Public Impact: Medium**

Members were informed that over recent years, there has been a focused effort upon increasing income in order to reduce the overall net cost of the BMI to the Council, with the net budget reducing from £365,279 for 2013/14 to £306,196 in 2014/15. Further MTFP savings applied in 2014/15 via operational efficiencies, a staff restructure and further income generation have reduced the 2015/16 net budget to £296,449 (a reduction of 19% since 2013/14).

In taking into account the valuable community and arts contribution of the BMI, it was proposed to achieve a 2016/17 MTFP savings target of £37,000 through a targeted approach to maximising income generation opportunities and further efficiencies in the operation of the BMI. Members were also advised that a Task and Finish Group (or Working Group) would be established to undertake a review of the operating model for Blackwood Miners Institute with a view to delivering a potential saving of £111,000 for 2017/18. A detailed report will be presented for Member consideration, outlining the conclusions and recommendations of the Group.

In responding to Member queries regarding further efficiencies in 2016/17, Officers outlined the progress made to date and explained that via a recent staff restructure within the BMI, a saving of £10,000 for 2015/16 had been achieved. Officers confirmed that further savings would be achieved via a combination of measures, including further staffing efficiencies and an increase in income generation opportunities.

Members referred to the Blackwood Miner Institute's status as a Charitable Trust and the recent approval of a Council-run board of trustees to satisfy the legal requirements of the Charities Commission, and sought further information on the details of the new Trust and associated board of trustees. Officers provided clarification on the structure and role of the new board (which would involve the staggered introduction of Council representatives from across a number of service areas). They explained that the relevant documentation is currently being developed and carefully examined to ensure it meets all legal requirements and that it was anticipated that the board of trustees would be established in the near future.

Members expressed concerns in respect of the potential financial liability implications for trustees, and assurances were given that all the relevant preventative measures would be implemented prior to the board of trustees being established. A number of Members indicated that they would be interested in joining this board once it had been set up.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 2 against) this was agreed by the majority present.

**ERP25 – Evaluate options to reduce the deficit at the Winding House Museum (Saving £34k in 2016/17 and £102k in 2017/18)  
(Public Impact: Medium)**

The report informed Members of the value of the Winding House Museum (WHM) as a valuable heritage asset to the communities within Caerphilly CBC. The budgeted net cost of the WHM to the Council for 2015/16 is £271,964 (having reduced from £283,328 in 2014/15).

It was proposed that a saving proposal of £34,000 for 2016/17 would be achievable through the implementation of initiatives to reduce overall running costs. In addition (and similarly to the proposal for Blackwood Miner's Institute) a Task and Finish Group (or Working Group) would fully explore and evaluate a number of options available, including the operating model for the Winding House, to enable the net cost to the Council to be potentially reduced by a further £102,000 during 2017/18. A detailed report will be presented for Member consideration, outlining the conclusions and recommendations of the Group.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 2 against) this was agreed by the majority present.

**5. ENGINEERING DIVISION - 2016/17 DRAFT SAVINGS PROPOSALS WITH AN IMPACT ON SERVICE USERS AND/OR THE PUBLIC**

Terry Shaw (Head of Engineering Services) presented details of the draft savings proposals for 2016/17 within the Engineering Division which will have an impact on service users and/or the public.

**ENG04 - School Crossing Patrol Site Reduction through necessary Site Assessments (Saving £10,000)  
Public Impact: Low**

It was proposed that where resignations and retirements occur, School Crossing Patrol sites will be reviewed against national guidance and assessment criteria, and those sites no longer qualifying will be withdrawn. This would bring about a saving of £10,000 for 2016/17.

Officers explained that the application of national criteria to such sites is already established and has been applied to these sites for the last 18 months, although it had not previously been included as an MTFP saving (and as such, the savings have been brought about by the implementation of national policy).

Members raised concerns that it would be difficult to achieve these savings due to a risk that some sites would not meet the criteria and therefore would not achieve the savings. Officers explained that a number of school crossing patrol sites had been inherited from previous local authorities and that the historical criteria basis on which these sites had been formed did not necessarily meet this national criteria. Members were also informed that a report had previously been presented to the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee on this matter and were reminded of the savings that would be achieved by applying national criteria to these sites.

Concerns were expressed that it was not evident which sites could be affected by the proposals. Officers explained that they were aware of which sites could be withdrawn in view of forthcoming retirements, and confirmed that school head teachers would be informed of the intention to withdraw sites once identified (which would in turn be relayed to parents).

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 8 against), the motion was declared lost.

The Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny therefore determined that they were unable to support this proposal (in that the ongoing application of national criteria to such sites be formalised and non-qualifying sites withdrawn) and indicated that they would wish for possible savings to be examined elsewhere as an alternative to this proposal.

**ENG10 - Increase Car Park Excess Charge Notice (ECN) from £30 to £40 (Saving £25,000)  
Public Impact: Low**

Members were informed that following a comparison with neighbouring local authorities, it was proposed that car park Excess Charge Notices (ECN) be increased from £30.00 to £40.00 per notice, which would result in an additional £25,000 for 2016/17. Town and Community Councils, community partnerships, Members and the public will be consulted in accordance with the Council's constitution, via the Traffic Regulation Order process.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

### **ENG13 - Reduce Traffic Management Operational Budget (Saving £10,000)**

#### **Public Impact: Low**

It was proposed that the Traffic Management operational budget of £40,000 be reduced to £30,000, which would bring about a saving of £10,000 and limit the number of Traffic Regulation Orders that can be progressed each year. This will reduce delivery times to Members and the public for changes to street parking arrangements.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

### **ENG17 - Reduce Community Response Team Operational Budget (Saving £9,000)**

#### **Public Impact: Low**

It was proposed to reduce the budget for the Council's Community Response Team by £9,000. The service reacts to requests for minor maintenance works in the local community. The saving can be achieved via the budget for the Team being incorporated into Highways Operations in 2015/16, and so costs for materials can be integrated into the overall budget, allowing for efficiencies to be made.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands (and in noting there was 1 against) this was agreed by the majority present.

### **ENG12 - Review of Car Parking Charges (Saving £50,000)**

#### **Public Impact: Medium**

Members were informed that it was proposed to increase car parking charges by 10p per hour across the county borough. Although previous car park increases over a short period of time have seen a corresponding decrease in car parking usage over the short term, it was considered that the proposal should be introduced and reviewed after 12 months to monitor its impact. It would then be considered as part of a wider comprehensive review of the management of highways-owned off street car parks.

A Member suggested that car parking charges could be introduced in a number of free car parks (including park and ride car parks) across the county borough as a means of increasing revenue. Officers explained that it would not be cost-effective to introduce charges within the smaller free car parks around the county borough. Members were advised that a previous proposal to introduce park and ride charges had not been supported by the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee, and also that introducing park and ride charges in certain areas could create parking issues in adjacent residential streets. Members were also reminded of the need to consider increasing car parking charges in that a rise had not occurred since 2010.

It was suggested that a list of viable locations in respect of introducing charges in smaller car parks be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee. Concerns were also expressed in respect of a blanket increase across all chargeable car parks and Members suggested that alternatively a reduced charge could be implemented within less popular car parks located on the outskirts of town centres to increase their usage. Officers confirmed that both these matters would be examined as part of the wider comprehensive review of the management of off-street car parks.

Following consideration of the report, a number of Members indicated that they did not wish to support the proposed increase in car parking charges, and thus it was moved and seconded that this proposal not be supported. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 6 against), this was agreed by the majority present.

The Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny therefore determined that they were unable to support this proposal and indicated that they wished for alternative options/savings to be examined (including the avenues suggested to Officers during the course of the debate).

**ENG14 - Reduce Planned Carriageway Operational Resurfacing Budget (Saving £50,000)**

**Public Impact: Medium**

The Highways Act 1980 places a statutory duty upon the Highway Authority (i.e. the Council) to maintain a safe highway network for its users, which is fulfilled through a combination of reactive and proactive inspections and repairs. A £50,000 reduction to the planned carriageway resurfacing budget was proposed for 2016/17, which will result in a 5.8% reduction to the annual area of treatment (approximately 3,800m<sup>2</sup> per annum). Such a reduction may diminish the quality and resilience of the carriageway which may lead to increased defects and potentially increased insurance claims.

It is recognised that the Council's draft Highways Asset Management Plan has projected that the condition of the highway network will continue to decrease unless additional funding is identified over and above what has been provided in previous years. However, in this wider context, the overall impact of the 2016/17 MTFP saving proposal is minimal.

Concerns were raised as to the impact of an extremely cold winter on the resulting condition of highway surfaces and the need for increased repairs and Officers confirmed that a contingency budget will be utilised in such an eventuality. Members were also advised that the Council has invested in preventative maintenance techniques and the use of new innovative technology (such as the Multihog and Velocity Patcher machines) to address carriageway repairs in a cost-effective manner.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands (and in noting there was 1 against) this was agreed by the majority present.

**ENG15 - Reduce Carriageway Surface Dressing Budget (Saving £100,000)**

**Public Impact: Medium**

It was proposed that the carriageway surface dressing budget be reduced by £100,000 for 2016/17, which will result in a 9% reduction in the annual area of treatment (approximately 20,000m<sup>2</sup> per annum). As with the reduction in the planned carriageway operational resurfacing budget, it is recognised that such a reduction may diminish the quality and resilience of the carriageway which may lead to increased defects and potentially increased insurance claims.

It is also recognised that the Council's draft Highways Asset Management Plan has projected that the condition of the highway network will continue to decrease unless additional funding is identified over and above what has been provided in previous years. However, in this wider context, the overall impact of the 2016/17 MTFP saving proposal is minimal.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

**6. COMMUNITY AND LEISURE SERVICES DIVISION - 2016/17 DRAFT SAVINGS PROPOSALS WITH AN IMPACT ON SERVICE USERS AND/OR THE PUBLIC**

Mark S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services) presented details of the draft savings proposals for 2016/17 within the Community and Leisure Services Division which will

have an impact on service users and/or the public.

**CL04 - Reduction in Allotment Grants to Allotment Federations (Saving £14,000)**

**Public Impact: Low**

The Authority currently pays £28,000 per annum to the Allotment Federations (who manage allotment sites across the county borough on behalf of the Authority). The proposed saving of £14,000 will therefore reduce the grant level by 50% in 2016/17. Although this has been classified as having a “low” impact to the public across the county borough, there is potential for significant representations to be made to Members from the Federations and plot holders. However, it must be acknowledged that the Federations have the ability to increase income through setting new plot charges. The ultimate risk is that the Federations cease to exist and the Authority will then have to manage the allotments directly.

In response to a Member’s query, Officers explained that a consultation meeting had recently been held between Council Officers and the Rhymney and Caerphilly Allotment Federations to discuss the proposals but that a clear outcome had not been established regarding this matter.

Discussion took place between Members and Officers in respect of allotment plot hire costs, the popularity of allotments and the number of vacant plots, the role of the Allotment Federations and their financial accountability, and other external sources of funding available to the Federations.

In response to Members’ queries, Officers confirmed that the 50% reduction in funding to the Federations was the first such reduction of its kind. Members suggested that it would be beneficial for negotiation to take place between Officers and the Federations on the proposed level of reduction in funding.

It was moved and seconded that consideration of this proposal be deferred pending the outcome of further discussions and negotiations between Officers and the Allotment Federations. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

**CL07 - Reduction in Playground Maintenance Budget (Saving £9,000)**

**Public Impact: Low**

It was proposed to reduce the available budget to fund replacement and additional items of playground equipment by £9,000. Officers explained that this reduction can be managed with minimal impact and the Authority’s statutory Health and Safety responsibilities will still be maintained. There may be periods where playgrounds are out of commission for longer periods than in previous years. Sites suffering from repeated levels of vandalism and in need of regular repair may need to be considered for removal of certain equipment or complete closure in order to meet the requirements of the Authority’s budget strategy.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

**CL19 - Removal of 5 additional posts in the Cleansing Service and Reconfiguration of Structure/Service Delivery (Saving £110,000)**

**Public Impact: Low**

It was proposed to achieve savings of £110,000 in the Cleansing Service through the deletion of posts linked to voluntary early retirement/voluntary severance/redeployment. It is likely that minor changes to working practices can be made to mitigate any effects on service delivery to the public.

Discussion took place regarding the recruitment of apprentices in this service area and the range of duties and requirements associated with the cleansing posts to be deleted. Members expressed concerns that the deletion of posts could impact on cleansing standards in some areas of the county borough, especially in relation to litter picking. Officers explained that these duties would be assimilated via the proposed reconfiguration of the staffing structure (which would include an assessment of the existing workload within the service area).

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

**CL20 - Introduction of Admin (Waste Transfer Note) Charges for Commercial Waste Customers (Saving £20,000)**  
**Public Impact: Low**

It was proposed to achieve savings of £20,000 through the introduction of an administration fee for the management of legal (waste transfer note) documentation for Commercial Waste customers.

This will only impact on commercial waste customers and is already charged by service competitors and many other local authorities. Officers explained that the level of fees varies between local authorities, and they outlined the processes involved in the management of legal waste documentation.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

**CL30 - 4% Increase across a range of Leisure Centre Charges (Saving £50,000)**  
**Public Impact: Low**

The proposed increase in charges (which will achieve £50,000 in revenue) has been set at 4% to represent a reasonable incremental increase. This should be of relatively low impact to Leisure Centre users and achievement of income will be closely monitored as the year progresses.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

**CL31 - Changing the pricing structure for the Caerphilly Adventure Service (Saving £18,000)**  
**Public Impact: Low**

The net cost of the Caerphilly Adventure Service to the Council for 2015/16 is £113,000. It was proposed that the pricing structure be reviewed to achieve additional income and the main increases will then be applied to services offered to external customers.

Officers outlined the role of the Caerphilly Adventure Service (which is wide ranging and includes the organising of activities/expeditions, and works with many organisations, including Families First, Education and individual schools, as well as corporate/private individuals) and provided an explanation of the income streams received by the service.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

**CL14 - Bowling Green Rationalisation (Saving £50,000 in 2016/17 and £120,000 in 2017/18)**

**Public Impact: Medium**

Councillor D.T. Davies (Chair) declared a prejudicial interest in that he is a member of Bargoed Bowls Club, and left the meeting room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth (Vice-Chair) took the Chair for this item.

Officers explained that it was proposed to achieve a total saving of £170,000 over 2 years through the merger of some bowls clubs/facilities, the closure of 3 facilities (with the lowest number of members) and bowling clubs taking on an element of self-management supported with a reduced Council maintenance regime. If some facilities close, then this will result in the public having to join or transfer their membership to existing clubs to enable their continued participation in the sport.

Officers have held meetings throughout Summer 2015 with all bowls clubs across the Authority, and these meetings have proved to be very positive. A specific report on this saving proposal is due to be presented to Cabinet prior to consideration of the whole-Authority savings proposals in February 2016.

Officers provided clarification in respect of the proposals and the outcomes of the meetings to date, explaining that closure of one bowls club had been agreed by all parties. With regards to possible mergers, discussions were ongoing with a view to merging Abertridwr, Oakdale and Islwyn Park bowls clubs. Bargoed and New Tredegar Bowls Clubs have also been identified as possible candidates for a merger.

A Member raised concerns that local ward members had not been included in the discussions between Officers and bowls clubs management for the proposals relating to bowls clubs in their wards. The Member expressed reservations in voting on the proposal, explaining that they had not been party to these discussions (including any resulting issues or outcomes raised) and as a result they would be abstaining from voting on this proposal. It was suggested that a copy of the letter sent to bowls clubs summarising the outcome of discussions could be provided to local ward members to update them on the current situation.

The same Member also expressed reservations in voting on this proposal when there was uncertainty as to which bowls clubs would be affected and explained that it would have been beneficial to view a list of the sites that could be affected by these proposals.

Officers referred to the report that was due to be presented to Cabinet in February 2016 regarding this specific proposal, explaining that this report could not be presented to the Scrutiny Committee at this time as they were awaiting the results of the meeting between Bargoed and New Tredegar Bowls Clubs regarding a possible merger, before completing the report. They offered to circulate it to the Scrutiny Committee ahead of its presentation to Cabinet. Members were also informed that the number of parties attending the bowls clubs meetings had been kept to a minimum for practical purposes.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands (and in noting there was 1 against and 3 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

**CL25 - Transfer of Bedwas Leisure Centre to Bedwas High School (Saving £50,000 in 2016/17 and £50,000 in 2017/18)**

**Public Impact: Medium**

It was proposed to transfer the management of Bedwas Leisure Centre to Bedwas High School, which would achieve a saving of £50,000 in 2016/17 and again in 2017/18.

Discussions are at an advanced stage with the school's Headteacher who is keen to proceed with the transfer, although an agreement has not yet been reached regarding the proposals.

Officers outlined further details of the proposals and the associated implications in respect of funding and the future use of the leisure centre. A business plan has been communicated to the school to enable income to be generated from the school and public swimming lessons programme. The school will be provided with an annual subsidy to manage the facility in accordance with curriculum priorities.

Concerns were raised in respect of the implications of the proposals on public use of the facility. Officers explained that the facility is not open to the public in the day (evenings only) and is open for pre-paid swimming lessons and pool parties on Saturday. Members were advised that the proposals may allow for some limited public usage and that any reduction in swimming provision can be mitigated through delivery programmes developed by Bedwas High School and Caerphilly Leisure Centre.

Officers confirmed that maintenance issues (such as boiler repair) would become the responsibility of Bedwas High School if the transfer took effect, but explained that the facility was generally in a good state of repair. Discussion took place as to contingency plans if the school were unable to maintain the management of the site in future years. Officers also confirmed that if the school's governing body were not in agreement with the Head on the proposed transfer, then the use of the leisure centre would be re-examined as part of the Authority's wider leisure strategy.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that this proposal be supported. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 16th February 2016, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR